

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #222 (2000-2001)

March 19, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS' TOP YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a nationwide program that recognizes middle and high school students who have demonstrated exemplary community service. Each year the top two students from each state receive an award of \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., for national recognition events. This year the top two Alaska honorees are Anchorage School District students Kari Wise and Justin Gonka.

Kari Wise, a junior at Polaris K-12 School, developed a program to help middle school students lead healthy lives. The idea for this program, titled "View on Your Future is all about You," developed when she learned a close friend was contemplating suicide. Kari realized that many young people turn to destructive behaviors because they don't know how to deal with difficult life experiences. So Kari solicited the help of local businesses for donations of material and services and produced a youth-friendly booklet about making healthy choices.

Justin Gonka, an eighth-grader at Central Middle School, has volunteered to support and encourage Special Olympics athletes for the past five years. He started helping with the bowling team and then moved on to other sporting events. Justin also encouraged his school to sponsor two teams from Spain and France for the Special Olympics World Winter Games. He hopes to one day become a Special Olympics coach.

It is requested the School Board recognize Spirit of Community state honorees Kari Wise and Justin Gonka for caring enough to reach out and make a difference in this community.

CC/LW/CW

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